



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE **105th** CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 144

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 19, 1998

No. 64

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Dr. Jere Allen, Executive Director, District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

We are very pleased to have you with us.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Dr. Jere Allen, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that Thou art the creator and sustainer of this, Thy universe, and we are called to be caretakers of all Thou hast made for an appointed time. Guide the inner control centers of these Thy servants in the Senate that they might be responsible stewards of the power of decision granted to them. Bring to their consciousness that evil rewards with temporary power and impermanent gain, but righteousness is eternally on the scaffolds and will ultimately sway the future. Move their consciousness upward toward the crystal clear purity of Thyself. Grant those who serve here the ability to hear Thy voice in the midst of a cacophony of conflicting opinions that vie for attention. Endow them with wisdom, patience, courage and peace as they make and live with decisions that affect so many. In Your holy Name we pray. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I thank the Chair.

APPRECIATION OF THE OPENING PRAYER

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in thanking our visiting Chaplain for the opening prayer today.

SCHEDULE

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, today there will be a period of morning business until 10 a.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1415, the tobacco legislation. It is hoped that Members will come to the floor to debate this important legislation and other amendments under short time agreements. Rollcall votes may occur prior to the 12:30 policy luncheons, and Members should expect those throughout today's session in order to make good progress on the tobacco bill.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able minority leader is recognized.

(Mr. HUTCHINSON assumed the Chair.)

TOBACCO AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the debate on tobacco legislation that we will begin again at 10 o'clock this morning is one of the most significant in which any of us will ever be involved.

Smoking is, in the words of former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, "the chief, single avoidable cause of death in our society, and the most important public health issue of our time."

Every year, tobacco kills more than 400,000 Americans—accounting for more than one out of every five deaths in our country. Smoking kills more people than die from AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, murders, suicides and fires—combined.

So often, when we hear that someone has died as a result of smoking, we

think, "That was their choice. They were adults."

But chances are, they were not adults when they made the decision to pick up that first cigarette.

Ninety percent of adult smokers started smoking at or before the age of 18—before they were even old enough to buy cigarettes legally.

The average youth smoker starts smoking at 13, and is addicted by the time he or she is 14. One out of every three of those children will eventually die from smoking.

It may take another 20 or 30—or even 50—years until that decision catches up with them. But the decision is made when they are children.

That is what this debate is really about. Are we willing, as a nation, to protect our children from an epidemic that may eventually kill them?

During the first half of this century, another epidemic threatened America's children: polio.

Summer was a time of fear for American parents and their children. Parents kept their children out of swimming pools, movie theaters—anywhere the virus might be spread.

Still, thousands of children died every year from polio, and tens of thousands were crippled.

The worst polio epidemic in U.S. history occurred in 1952, when nearly 60,000 new cases were reported.

Back then, America marshaled all its resources and all its resolve and, in 1953, Jonas Salk discovered a vaccine.

As a result, polio has all but vanished from this nation.

We may not be able to eliminate all tobacco-related disease, as we eliminated polio. But we can dramatically reduce the number of people who pick up that first cigarette as teenagers and become addicted and eventually die from smoking.

The bill that will be pending in just a few moments provides the comprehensive approach that is needed to do that.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper containing 100% post consumer waste

S5031